

# NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING FUND

## SMALL SPARKS FUND

## FALL BACK TO SCHOOL -

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: When is the fall back-to-school season?**

A: Any event or activity that occurs in the fall that involves and engages youth would be considered a fall back-to-school activity.

**Q: What types of projects do you fund?**

A: Fall back- to-school events are intended to strengthen neighborhood spirit and community building by celebrating the youth in the community going back to school. Seattle Department of Neighborhoods is interested in funding projects that provide maximum opportunities for community building, outreach, and intentionally bringing neighbors together. The most successful fall back-to-school activities have youth involvement as the main goal and are organized around a theme. A few examples are organizing a walking school bus, hosting a youth talent show, recruiting PTA/PTSA members, or having an autumn festival. The activities must be free and open to all. Events need to be more than just a party, and there should be some clear intentionality around community building and making the neighborhood a better place.

**Q: Who can apply?**

A: Groups of neighbors, community councils, ad-hoc project committees, PTA/PTSA's, and non-profit neighborhood organizations with operating budgets of less than \$25,000 a year. Groups don't have to be formally organized in order to receive funding.

**Q. How do I apply?**

A. We have an online application process. You first need to go to [webgrants.seattle.gov](http://webgrants.seattle.gov) to register and be given a password. This process can take up to 48 hours (especially over the weekend), so please do this immediately. We encourage you to speak with a Neighborhood Matching Fund project manager for assistance with the application process.

**Q: How soon do I need to apply in order to receive funding?**

A: Applications for fall back-to-school activities must be received at least six weeks before the date of your activity or event. We encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

**Q: Do I need insurance?**

A: Yes, all Neighborhood Matching Fund-supported projects, including Small Sparks, need insurance. Due to the cost it is advisable that you either partner with a fiscal sponsor that already has commercial general liability insurance, or you can include the cost of event insurance in your application. Research your options and be prepared to secure the insurance only after a signed contract is in place. If you need help contact a Matching Fund project manager.



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**Q: Can we rent a bouncy house or similar toy for our back-to-school fall event?**

A: No, NMF funds cannot be used to rent bouncy house or similar toy.

**Q: Do we need a fiscal sponsor?**

A: Yes, all projects require a fiscal sponsor who accepts the fiduciary responsibility for the award dollars. The fiscal sponsor can be a local group, a non-profit, or business – any group with a federal employer identification number. The fiscal sponsor does not need to be a 501 (c) (3). The fiscal sponsor is responsible for submitting the claim for reimbursement accompanied by the appropriate receipts and documentation. **Payment is made on a reimbursement basis only. Checks are no longer issued up front.** You cannot spend award dollars until after the application is submitted and a contract between the City and neighborhood group has been signed. Once a claim and accompanying status report is received from the grantee by the Department of Neighborhoods, reimbursement occurs within five working days.

**Q: Can we purchase food with the Small Sparks award?**

A: Yes, up to \$200 of the total requested amount can be used for food for public events, such as fruit platters, veggies, beverages, and other refreshments. An example of what is not allowed is individual fast food meals or restaurant meals for the planning committee. No alcohol can be purchased with City dollars.

**Q: Can we use the Small Sparks funding for entertainment?**

A: Yes, a neighborhood band, cultural performance, face painter or balloon maker are examples of eligible entertainment expenses.

**Q: Are there types of projects that won't be funded?**

A: Yes; a backyard barbeque, an invitation only event, or a party that is just a party without any community building outcomes.

**For more information please contact [NMF Staff member](#) at:**

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